

After the speech, Waddell received hearty applause and the paper claimed that the speech “electrified his hearers” as it was “the most remarkable delivery ever heard in a campaign here in the memory of this generation.” The writer was prophetic when he closed the article with the observation that the speech “will ring for all time.”<sup>25</sup>

Waddell’s popularity as an eloquent speaker who could reach his audience continued throughout the remainder of the campaign as a result of his Thalian Hall appearance. He received requests for speeches almost daily. At a large campaign rally in Goldsboro on October 28, Waddell thrust Wilmington into the spotlight as he detailed the “outrages” in the city since it had come under Fusion rule. Part of his Goldsboro speech included another adaptation of his famous line that Democrats would win the election if they had to clog the Cape Fear River with “carcasses.”<sup>26</sup>

After Waddell’s first October speech was printed in the papers, he received praise for his stance from his cousin Rebecca Cameron in Hillsborough. Cameron’s response to Waddell’s rhetoric is forceful. Cameron opened her letter by informing Waddell that women were “amazed, confounded, and bitterly ashamed of the acquiescence and quiescence of the men of North Carolina at the existing conditions; and more than once have we asked wonderingly: where are the white men and the shotguns!” She continued with a full letter supporting his speech. Cameron concluded her diatribe by informing Waddell that the ladies “are aflame with anger here. I wish you could see Anna, she is fairly rampant and blood thirsty. These blond women are terrible when their fighting blood is up.” She added

as a last thought: “I hope it will not come to the last resort but when it does, let it be Winchesters and buckshot at close range.”<sup>27</sup>

Waddell claimed that he did not seek prominence but was, instead, “begged to make a speech and did so, and that started the fire and from that time until now I have acted entirely upon the request of the people.”<sup>28</sup> As part of the speechmaking campaign, Democratic Party leaders pulled in Waddell in the late stages of the campaign, leading to localized rhetoric easily fueled by daily changes in the campaign. After Waddell’s speeches in which he proposed violence, Democratic Party leaders decided that the “temper of the community was hot enough and needed quieting down rather than heating up.”<sup>29</sup>

Although behind-the-scenes leaders apparently tried to temper some of the rhetoric, as the campaign drew to a close, well-received, highly motivational speakers such as Waddell were seen by the populace as leaders of the Democratic Party movement.

In Wilmington, the combined punch of the print campaign and speeches moved beyond the standard “white men must rule” rhetoric in the city, and another white supremacy tool—fear—emerged. Benjamin Keith observed that the papers had readers “believing everything that was printed, as well as news that was circulated and peddled on the streets.” Keith saw that the “frenzied excitement went on until every one but those who were behind the plot, with a few exceptions, were led to believe that the

<sup>25</sup> Waddell’s speech was published in its entirety in the *Wilmington Messenger*, October 25, 1898.

<sup>26</sup> *Wilmington Messenger*, October 28, 29, 1898; *Morning Star* (Wilmington), October 28, 1898;

<sup>27</sup> Rebecca Cameron to Alfred M. Waddell, October 26, 1898, A. M. Waddell Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill; Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 110-111.

<sup>28</sup> AM Waddell to Benahan Cameron, November 16, 1898, Benahan Cameron Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.

<sup>29</sup> Rountree, “Memorandum.”